

North Yorkshire County Council

18 July 2012

Scrutiny Board

Statement by the Chairman

On 12 June 2012 I attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conference in London. The conference focused on how the Localism Act particularly how provisions in the Act for new freedoms and flexibilities for local government and the new rights and powers for communities and individuals would impact on scrutiny. Key issues discussed included:

- How will scrutiny and accountability work in this new landscape?
- Does localism make accountability and scrutiny easier?
- What needs to be done to overcome the challenges of radical structural change?

We also explored 'hyper-localism' - the continued drive for scrutiny to be located at even greater local levels - down to communities, neighbourhoods, streets and individuals. Many local authorities are exploring innovative ways to connect with local communities and neighbourhoods.

The keynote speaker of the conference was Professor Sir Michael G. Marmot who has been involved in research into health inequalities for 35 years. His presentation emphasised that health inequalities are not inevitable. He believed that scrutiny can challenge and improve the way that individual councils approach this issue. In a broader sense, scrutiny can be used to question whether, we as a society, are doing enough to provide an environment that allows people to make choices that will have a positive influence on their health.

It was an extremely useful and thought provoking event.

County Councillor John Blackburn
Chairman: Scrutiny Board

29 June 2012